SATURDAY, JUNE 2, 1900

THEGITHER STILL.

It's you and I thegither still,
We're left now a' oor lane,
To help ilk ither doon the hill;
But we mauna complain.
Old age's snaws are fallin' fast,
Oor bairnies scattered far;
What sud we care for storm and blast,
Syne we thegither are?

It seems, guid wife, but just yestreen
When we foregathered hame,
What annals change fu' ile between,
But we are still the same.
Ah, then you were my bonnie bride,
Wi' hair a' auburn-brown;
We didna care for things o' pride
That crazed the neebrin' town.

Oor household altar we set up,
Ill-furnished but an' ben;
Aft drinkin' frae the self-same cup,
What mattered poortith then?
Without, the daisied glebe I pleughed,
You plied hand at the loom;
Let blast come doon, we closer stood
And gi'ed the stranger room.

For twa-score years we've held oor ain,
Ha'e had oor ups an' doons,
To cleek thegither still fu' fain
Through fortune's smiles and frowns.
And now life's tale is well-nigh tauld,
Oor sands are almost run;
The twilight's tremblin' star o' gold,
After the settin' sun!

—Rev. J. E. Rankin, D. D., in N. Y. Observer.

THE FUNNY MAN

By Kennett F. Harris.

"I WOULD have been disappointed if you had told me that you had a previous engagement," said the man who dealt in grain through the medium of tapes and yellow bulletins to the chronic dyspeptic with the sad expression of countenance. "I wouldn't have been the only one disappointed, either; the madam would have gone into mourning. She thinks you are about the whole thing when it comes to entertaining a miscellaneous crowd that never heard you before."

"That's good," said the dyspeptic, gratefully, as he seated himself at the lunch counter. "I like to hear that. It makes me think that I have not lived entirely in vain."

"Don't mention it," said the grain man. "I thought it would please you, so as it happened to be truth I said it. It wasn't any particular exertion to say it, and I don't really deserve much credit. She told me once that she thought you were awfully funny, but she don't know how funny you really are."

"At the same time," continued the dyspeptic, "I would rather have been invited for my more sterling and solid qualities. I thought that your wife knew and appreciated them. It galls when I am as good as told that it is the mere brilliancy—the meretricious brilliancy, I might say—of my conversational and anecdotal powers that has got me the bid."

"I wouldn't eat any more of those doughnuts if I were you," suggested the grain man. "You'll suffer for it later on and your family will suffer more or less, too. Honest, though, and not with any intention of stringing you, I'd like to know how you got it."

"In the legitimate way of business," replied the dyspeptic.

"I'm referring to that coruscating gab of yours."

"I'm glad to notice that you don't fall into the popular error of thinking it comes naturally. I got it as all geniuses get their acquirements, by hard work. As a kid I was diffident and reserved."

"You have got bravely over it."

"Certainly I have; but that was the way I started out. I was that kind of a kid that when I was on a visit to my Uncle George's I only opened my mouth once, except to put food into it, in the three weeks that I was there. Of course you understand that I said 'Yes' and 'No' and 'Thank you, I believe I will take another piece,' but I didn't attempt anything in the conversational way."

"Except the once?"

"Except the once. The way that happened was that there was a married cousin at dinner that day and she had brought her baby along.

"We were about half way through the dinner and they were all talking about the baby. After awhile there was a let-up and I raised my eyes from the tablecloth and saw my married cousin was looking at me. I looked at her, too. She was not at all a bad-looking woman, but that wasn't why, exactly. I guess I just looked at her because I happened to and I hadn't the grit to break away. I felt that my face was getting hot. She smiled at me sort of encouragingly, but it didn't have a cooling effect. I realized that it was up to me to say something, so I said it. Even then I was not the boy to shirk a responsibility. I asked her: 'Is it a boy or a girl?'

"The effect was something tremendous. My Uncle George let the carving knife drop on the floor, and my Cousin Caroline, who was rather an idiotic kind of a girl, sputtered on a glass of water she was drinking. The rest of them didn't say anything—they just laughed. Say!

"And my Uncle George wiped his eyes with his napkin and he remarked in a choky kind of a voice: 'Why, William, you're getting quite conversational.' Wouldn't that frost you?"

"I think," said the grain man, with an air of thoughtful consideration, "I think that it would have nipped me about the edges, so that I think I'd have wilted and turned black in places after the sun got up."

"I should imagine it would," said the dyspeptic. "Anyway, I consider that was the beginning of my career as a prandial and postprandial speaker."

"It just sort of took out the cork."

"Well, you can put it that way if you want to, but I should say it rather fired my ambition. If you are thinking about pie I can recommend that huckleberry; it's better than it looks.

"No, I realized for the first time how easily folks could be amused. My Uncle George never struck me as being a very funny man, although looking back from this distance I feel in my heart that if he appeared on a Chicago vaudeville stage with those whiskers of his the audience would have 17 different kinds of mirthful fits. But we were all used to his whiskers, of course, and there wasn't anybody in our simple little community that seemed to consider them particularly remarkable."

"I haven't a hobby," said the grain man, musingly. "I never had time, but if I had time to devote myself seriously I would love to make a collection of the remarkable whiskers I have met from day to day. But you were going to say—"

"I was going to say that I made up my mind that the next time I went to see my Uncle George I would make him look and feel like 30 cents when it came to setting the table in a roar. So as soon as I got home I sent for a jest book.

"It was a jest book in primrose paper covers, and it cost me one dime in silver. It was dirt cheap. One of the jests was this—I remember it well, having memorized it at the time, with about 50 others. I used to go out into the barn and recite them, and I practiced facial expression before a broken bit of looking glass that the hired man used when he shaved on Sundays. Yes, I remember that little jeu d'esprit mighty well: 'A man left a bony steed in the street, and coming back a short time afterward discovered that a funny youth had placed a card against the fleshless ribs bearing the notice: "Oats wanted Inquire within."'"

"Was that the joke?" inquired the grain man.

"That was the joke. There were others, but that was the one that I settled on for my maiden effort. There was another one that I thought was nearly as good, about a woman who rang her own doorbell three times before she roused the servant, who excused herself on the plea that she only heard the third ring. I thought that joke was a corker, but not quite up to the one about oats.

"I told the oat story to a venerable and kindly old jay named Baldwin. Everybody called him 'Uncle' Jerry Baldwin—you know the kind. He was sitting on a bucket turned upside down in the doorway of the livery stable. When I tackled him I said:

"I WOULDN'T EAT ANY MORE OF THOSE DOUGHNUTS."

'Uncle Jerry, I've got something to tell you—it's a joke.' And he said: 'Go ahead, sonny bug; I guess I can stand it.' And I told him.

"He drew down his jaw and scratched the hollow under his cheekbone. When I got through he didn't laugh, although I expected him to any minute. All he did was to look carefully around and then reach out and grab me. He carried me into the office under his arm and then sat down so that he could do it easy and basted me with the back of a currycomb until he couldn't baste me any longer. Then he shook me. Finally he said: 'That'll learn you, by George, you young cub,' and let me go."

"Didn't he explain himself more fully?" asked the grain merchant.

"I didn't ask him for any explanation just then," replied the dyspeptic, "but I kind of understood Uncle Jerry's feelings when I saw his team as he drove out of town. I don't blame him for thinking I meant something personal."

The dyspeptic rose and brushed the crumbs from his waistcoat and the grain merchant did likewise. As they went out the dyspeptic said: "Do you know what is the difference between photography and whooping cough? Of course you don't. One makes facsimiles and the other makes sick families."

The grain merchant groaned heavily.—Chicago Daily Record.

Conjugating a Verb.

A United States consul recently returned here gives the following account of how English is taught in the French schools: "Jean, you will stand up," said the master to his brightest pupil upon the occasion of the consul's visit. "Now conjugate the verb 'I have a gold mine.'" "I have a gold mine," responded the bright pupil, with scarcely an accent, "thou hast a gold thine, he has a gold hisen, we have a gold ourn, you have a gold yourn, they have a gold theirn."

Self-Deception.

"What is self-deception?" asked the boy.

"Well," replied the old gentleman, thoughtfully, "it is self-deception when I try to convince myself that your mother believes my story of being detained at the office by business."—Chicago Post.

Rats Used as Scavengers.

Rats are used by a Marquette (Mich.) mining company as underground scavengers to eat the scraps and fragments left from the miners' dinners.